

Walks 6a and 6b (5¾ and 8¾ miles) - Bucknell Wood - Stowe Hill - with optional extension via Ragged Kingdom

Walk 6a - Gentle climb through woods then easy walk with panoramic views. This is similar to walk 4, but follows a different route up through Bucknell Wood (solid line)

Walk 6b - As for walk 6a plus an easy 3 mile extension via Ragged Kingdom - flat, high level addition over grassy meadows with wonderful views (dashed line)

Walk 6a (5¾ miles) – Bucknell Wood and Stowe Hill

Leave the Baron at Bucknell and turn R onto Chapel Lawn road, then R again into Bridgend Lane. After a short while you join the river Redlake on your L. Walk as far as a house called “Seabridge”. Turn L and cross the footbridge over the river, then cross the road and walk along the forest track ahead. A short distance further on you reach a T-junction marked by a Forestry Commission sign saying Bucknell Wood, where you turn R.

Point A

Walk along the forest track, past a black-yellow barrier, until you reach a lay-by on your L. Bear L here and go past the gate onto a pleasant stony path. Follow this gently uphill, passing one bridleway and crossing another. After ½ mile a major track joins from the L.

Point B

Continue straight on for about ⅓ mile until you reach a deciduous clearing with a glimpse of views through the trees to your L. Resist the temptation to turn R at the first junction. Instead, carry on a little further and follow the track as it curves R uphill.

Point C



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As you gain height, forest clearing reveals open views to your R. Bucknell is spread out below you. To the L of Bucknell are the wooded slopes of Bucknell Hill and Hopton Titterhill, whilst behind Bucknell on the skyline is Titterstone Clee Hill (with its white radar dome). The village in the Redlake valley beneath you is Chapel Lawn. In the distance is the Long Mynd, while further L you can make out the rocky top of the Stiperstones.

After another ¾ mile the forest track comes to a gate, through which you step onto the open grassland of Stowe Hill.

Point D

In summer this is skylark territory. If you don't hear one on your visit, claim on your insurance. The iron age hill fort of Caer Caradoc (yes, another one; for explanation see walk 7) now dominates the view ahead R. The gorse on the top emphasises the line of the three ditches that provide the ancient fortifications of the hill.

Cross the field and go through a second gate, where you now have the option to turn L and limit the walk to 5¾ miles, or else carry on and complete a 8¾ mile circuit.

Point E

Having turned L, ignore the next gate immediately to your L and walk up the grassy hill, keeping the wood close to your L. Pass through two gates to reach the high point of the walk. Ahead of you on the distant horizon is the forbidding-looking flat top of the aptly named Black Mixen, identified by its central mast.

It's pretty much all downhill from here. Following the edge of the wood takes you to another gate, which leads into mixed woodland (ignore a gate on your L just before this). You then descend a delightful grassy path, until you exit (unsurprisingly) by another gate onto a broad farm track.

Point F

Turn L onto this track and follow it downhill, gently at first between trees and fields, and then more steeply through a splendid deciduous wood. Before you leave the wood, keep an eye open for a waymarked post that directs you to turn L, where you wend your way down through the wood. When you come to a fence turn L.

Point G

Keeping the fence close to your R, follow the clearly defined sunken track, which ends in a gate. Turn L onto the track beyond and carry on down towards the farm at Weston. Above you, if you're lucky, you may glimpse red kites (these have probably spread from Rhayader to the west, where an intensive programme of red kite reintroduction at Gigrin Farm has been very successful).

Down in the valley the meanders of the river Teme are clearly seen. If you want to impress your friends, point out to them that the actual distance travelled by a meandering river between two points, divided by the shortest distance between those two points, approximates very closely to the value of pi.

Just before the farm, leave the track and follow the waymarked route around the edge of the field. This takes you back onto the track a little further on, where you enter the farmyard via a kissing gate. Turn R and take a moment to view the restored overshot water wheel on your R. Join the road and turn L.

Point H

Walk along the road until you come to Cubbage Cottage.

Point I

At the fork in the road, keep L and follow the track gently uphill through the woods, ignoring any side paths. Pass an open field on your R and, where the fence ends, bear slightly R and cross the service road to follow the path down to the Chapel Lawn road.

Turn R at the bend in the road and the pub is immediately on your L.

Walk 6b (8¾ miles) – via Ragged Kingdom

This extension adds a further very easy 3 miles to Walk 6a, but you are rewarded with truly stunning views of the Marches hills.

From **Point E** you can see your path snaking up the hill in front of you. The path goes past a line of fir trees and gorse before coming to a bigger fir wood edged by larches. Go through another gate and walk ahead, keeping close to the fence and wood on your R.

here the wood ends, ½ mile further on, you pass through two gates between the wood on your R and a line of trees on your L, to regain open pasture and stunning views of the Welsh hills.

Point J

Carry straight on for a little over ½ mile with the fence on your R, through a series of three gates, until you come to a point where the path is lined by some trees. A little further on is another gate. Go through this and then turn 90° L through another waymarked gate into a field.

Point K

Keeping close to the fence on your L, walk straight on through five more gates and past a barn. At the last gate you will see another track joining from your R. Where the two tracks meet, at a kink in the fenceline, is a stile on your L. Go across this stile and bear half R across the field. As you crest the hill you will see three gates ahead of you. Pass through the left-hand gate and continue straight ahead, following the line of the hedge on your R down through two more gates and into a wood.

Point L

You are now entering Ragged Kingdom, where a delightful grassy track takes you down through deciduous trees, rhododendrons and carpets of bluebells in spring. At the bottom, the path emerges from the wood at a gate onto open grassland once more. In front of you is a small grassy mound – keep to the R of this and you will find yourself descending steeply down a stony track to a gate at the corner of a wood. Go through this gate and follow the track into Stowe village.

Point M

After passing above Stowe church the path divides into three – take the middle route ahead. The path climbs through the front garden of Hillside Cottage and then continues to meet a track from the R. Carry straight on and shortly afterwards fork L up the hill and through the wood. Ignore a path to the R and continue upwards past pheasant rearing pens.

Point N

Leave the wood by a gate and turn R onto an open grassy area, with the wood on your R and a gorse-covered hill to your L. Expect to see buzzards, ravens and even red kites.

Walk along the grass until you come to the end of the wood, where views of the Teme valley begin to open up on your R. Ahead of you is a gate – do not go through. Instead, keep L of the gate and walk ahead with the fence to your immediate R, into the wood. You are now at **Point G** on Walk 6a (see above).

Read the description for Walk 6a to return to Bucknell.